



## Village at Palisades Tahoe Specific Plan Frequently Asked Questions October 2024

### **What is the difference between the existing General Plan and the proposed Specific Plan? What is the purpose of the Specific Plan?**

The Olympic Valley General Plan and Land Use Ordinance (SVGPLUO) was approved in the early 80s as the community plan that established land use designations and zoning for Olympic Valley.

The Specific Plan's purpose is to define land use and design regulations to which every element of the project would be required to adhere. An approved Specific Plan does not authorize work to commence. Additional project approvals are required to ensure Specific Plan compliance before building permits can be issued and construction can begin.

The proposed Specific Plan would modify the existing land use designations and zoning, resulting in 58% fewer beds than allowed under the current zoning for Olympic Valley. It also more than doubles the acres of land placed into conservation preservation and would allow us to finally submit project applications to build on-site workforce housing and visitor accommodations our community needs.

### **How will this project benefit the community?**

The future of Palisades Tahoe includes:

- New, dedicated in-valley workforce housing for up to 300 employees – all of which will be built in the first phase
- An additional \$7.5M in TOT revenue to contribute to regional workforce housing, transportation, tourism mitigation, and other regional priorities
- 17 miles of new and existing multi-purpose trail improvements
- Extensive restoration of Washeshu Creek to offer improved function for water quality, biological habitat, and flood control. A trail and interpretive area will also provide a public amenity
- \$3.4M in parks and trails fees and \$210,000 in annual maintenance
- \$500,000 toward additional regional workforce housing initiatives
- \$2M to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency for mobility improvements in Placer County that will reduce VMT in the Tahoe Basin
- A 2.5% lodging fee on all future short-term lodging would generate approximately \$1M per year for additional workforce housing and transportation initiatives
- Up to \$15,000 annually to the USFS for maintenance of multi-purpose trails on federal land
- A new fire station, response vehicles and 6 additional full-time firefighters in Olympic Valley
- \$800,000 contribution to "regional interests" in support of environmental restoration efforts, open space acquisitions, trails or public safety within Olympic Valley
- Construction of a public transit center within the village and ongoing fee contributions to fund TART public transit route enhancements along Highway 89 between Tahoe City and Truckee



- Trail and trailhead improvements to the Granite Chief and Shirley Canyon trails to add flush bathrooms, trail signage, and parking improvements
- Flush toilets and a new sewer connection at Olympic Valley Park to replace the existing pit toilets

**If approved, won't this Plan bring more people and traffic to the region?**

A 2023 study by LCS Transportation Consultants concluded that *“the project at full buildout will increase winter PM-peak-hour peak-direction traffic volumes by less than 2 vehicles per minute and less than 1 vehicle per minute in the off-peak direction”* and *“similarly, the winter AM peak-hour volumes would be increased by only 1.1 vehicles per minute.”*

The development plan is anticipated to spread out arrival and departure hours and days by capturing more skiers in overnight stays, compared to today's pre- and post-ski day compression. Additionally, employee commutes and delivery vehicles into the valley will be significantly reduced because employee parking and shipping/receiving will be at the East parcel entrance to the valley.

It is well known that the entire Tahoe region has a severe shortage of workforce housing and accommodations for those who are already coming here. This plan will build new workforce housing units and provide alternative accommodations for visitors who currently stay in short-term rentals within our community's residential neighborhoods, both of which will help take cars off area roadways.

**Has the project been changed to include community feedback?**

The project was modified and reduced over time based on extensive community and guest feedback that included 300 outreach presentations and meetings with over 5,000 guests and community members. Significant changes included the reduction of the plan, building heights and the total number of buildings to protect viewsheds, accelerated timing and enhanced improvements to Washeshu Creek, a reduction in the project area that was not on already disturbed land, and more.

Additionally, we've continued to listen to community feedback and have taken direct action to make changes. For example, the plan no longer includes the "water park" features that were initially proposed and includes a new commitment to provide full-time Eastern Placer County residents with discounted access to the Mountain Adventure Camp facility if it is built. We have also agreed to build in-valley workforce housing for up to 300 employees rather than pay an in-lieu fee, and to construct it all in the first phase of the project.

**Wasn't this project denied by the Court of Appeal? Does that mean that the court determined the project was wrong for Olympic Valley, and that the applicant must propose something different if they want to construct new development at the resort base?**

No, the court did not deny the project. The Court of Appeal required Placer County to rescind the project approvals, and on November 8, 2022, the Board of Supervisors acted in accordance with that order.



The role of the Court of Appeal is not to determine whether the project is right or wrong, too big, or needs to be reconfigured. A lawsuit under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) doesn't determine whether a project is a good idea or not. The role of CEQA is to determine whether all the potential environmental impacts of the project are adequately analyzed and whether sufficient mitigation has been put in place to minimize those impacts to the extent possible.

The court ruling determined that the project's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) did not adequately address impacts in four areas related to Lake Tahoe's water quality; transit service funding; which emergency response agency would provide traffic control, which could affect evacuation; and noise impacts during construction. These deficiencies in the EIR required the County to rescind the previous project approvals until the additional analysis of those areas can be completed. The project can still move forward if the EIR deficiencies are corrected, and the County re-certifies the EIR and re-approves the project.

Palisades Tahoe resubmitted the Specific Plan to the County in 2022. The plan is unchanged since 2016 apart from minor updates to place names (e.g., Palisades Tahoe, Washeshu Creek). The County and its consultants then prepared a partially revised Draft EIR and a Final EIR to address the Court's concerns, specifically in the areas of transit, impacts on the Tahoe Basin (air quality and hydrology and water quality), construction noise, and wildfire and evacuation.

The Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the Plan to the Board of Supervisors in September 2024. The Board of Supervisors will decide the adequacy of the Final EIR and merits of the project at their meeting on November 19, 2024.

**What are the four environmental issues that had to be addressed and reevaluated, and what were the results of the new studies that were completed?**

At the request of Palisades Tahoe, County staff and their environmental consultants addressed these issues as directed by the court. The issues addressed in the partially recirculated EIR are:

1. **Transportation and Circulation (Transit):** The court **rejected the argument** that the EIR's traffic mitigation was inadequate, however held one mitigation measure was too vague. The partially revised EIR expands and clarifies this mitigation measure.
2. **Air Quality and Water Quality (Tahoe Basin):** The court found that the EIR did not contain enough information on potential air and water quality impacts to the Tahoe Basin from Project vehicle trips. The partially revised EIR provides extensive analysis of the potential for project-related trips to adversely affect air and water quality in the Tahoe Basin, and concludes that while there would be an impact, it would be less than significant.
3. **Wildfire Evacuation:** **The court rejected 7 of 8** complainant arguments on wildfire evacuation but found the EIR was insufficient regarding which emergency response agency would provide traffic control, which could affect evacuation. The partially revised EIR corrects that error, stating correctly that the CHP and Sheriff would be responsible



for traffic control during an evacuation, and providing additional details on the procedures that would be used by emergency responders during a wildfire.

4. **Construction Noise:** The court found that the EIRs did not analyze the full geographic range of construction noise impacts and deferred some noise mitigation. The partially revised clarifies the role of the 50-foot perimeter in the noise analysis, addresses noise impacts beyond 50 feet, and adds items to the list of mitigation measures for construction noise. The EIR also notes that construction will ebb and flow during the years of Specific Plan implementation, and that “25 years of construction” was never meant to represent 25 years of continuous construction noise.

**I heard that the project proponent, Alterra Mountain Company, has asked Placer County to restart environmental review of the project. Does that mean that the whole EIR process must be completely redone?**

In the Court of Appeal decision, the County prevailed on multiple grounds. Specifically, the discussion on air quality and climate change impacts and related mitigation measures, the County’s decision not to recirculate the EIR based on revisions to the greenhouse gas emissions analysis that happened through the course of the County’s review; traffic mitigation measures were adequate; and seven of the eight issues raised regarding wildfire impacts were properly analyzed by the County.

The court ruling did, however, determine that the County needed to correct deficiencies in the EIR related to Lake Tahoe’s water quality; transit service; which emergency response agency would provide traffic control, which could affect evacuation; and noise impacts during construction, to move forward with the project and to re-certify the EIR. The County received a request from the applicant to proceed with the edits to revise the EIR to address the concerns raised by the Court of Appeal. The County has completed the process of adding to the analysis only on those issues identified in the Court of Appeal ruling. The court’s ruling also is affirmation that the remainder of the EIR is adequate and does not need to be updated unless another aspect of the project is modified. Therefore, the revised environmental review analysis is limited to the issues identified by the Court of Appeal.

Running parallel with the EIR process is the project entitlement process. The entitlement process will evaluate the project as a whole, and ultimately it will be up to the Board of Supervisors to determine whether the project should be approved.

**Conditions have changed since 2016 when the plan was first approved. Shouldn’t the entire plan be restudied?**

The findings of the environmental studies conducted to support the 2016 EIR – whose purpose was to establish baseline data – continue to be relevant today. Updated analyses were conducted to support the 2022 partially revised draft EIR, and the resort has acted to both implement initiatives and provide support to help address regional issues of concern like transportation and workforce housing.

**What about the Water Supply Assessment and other major project studies. Since the project approvals were rescinded, don’t all the supporting studies have to be redone?**



The Water Supply Assessment (WSA) prepared for the project, which analyzed all existing water demand, plus project demand, plus other forecasted development over a 25-year horizon in accordance with state law, was upheld in the trial court ruling and was not challenged as part of the appeal. Based on demand assumptions the WSA concluded the Olympic Valley Groundwater Basin has sufficient supply to meet the needs of the Project, in addition to the existing and planned future uses in the Olympic Valley over the next 25 years in normal, single, and multiple dry years.

The court decision has validated the assumptions, modeling, and forecasting of impacts analyzed in the project's WSA and other technical studies as adequate. These supporting studies for the project would need updating if substantial evidence demonstrates that (1) substantial changes would occur to the proposed project leading to new or substantially more severe significant effects; (2) substantial changes with respect to the circumstances under which a project is undertaken would result in new or substantially more severe significant effects; or (3) new information which was not or could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the EIR was certified shows that new or substantially more severe significant impacts would occur.

However, there are no known substantial changes regarding the circumstances under which the project would be undertaken that would lead to new or substantially more severe environmental impacts since certification of the EIR in 2016. Impacts that were found by the Court to be adequately addressed, and/or that were not subject to the lawsuit, are therefore not included in the Partially Revised Draft EIR. Under CEQA, the project is evaluated from the point in time when the Notice of Preparation for the EIR was circulated for public review, which was 2012. If there are significant changes to the environment, they will be looked at and evaluated from both the EIR and project entitlement perspective. The EIR is based on the 2012 date, however, for purposes of whether this is the right project, the Board of Supervisors will consider everything up to the current date.

**Will all the EIR be updated? To what extent is more going to be looked at other than the four points raised by the Appellate Court based on other factors that have changed since the project was approved? What are the mechanisms for the public to address changes that have occurred? Can the public or Board of Supervisors ask for other changes in the EIR?**

The County will look at all issues in its determination of whether the project makes sense, however, the EIR portion of the process is limited to those issues raised by the Court of Appeal. Opportunities to address other factors that may have changed since the project was approved will occur during the County's review of the project entitlements, which is the terminology used to describe the land use authorizations sought by the project.

**If impacts in areas being reevaluated cannot be fully mitigated does that require changes be made to the project?**

The County is required to identify and adopt feasible mitigation measures for all project impacts. On a project of this scale, it is not unusual that some impacts cannot be fully mitigated to a level that can be stated with certainty as "less than significant." Still, the CEQA process allows approval of a project with



impacts that are not fully mitigated if the project is considered to have public benefits that would outweigh the impacts of the project.

**No one knows what will happen in a year. We know a lot more about wildfire and drought than we did when the project was approved. How can we make decisions based on an unknown future environment?**

The project is responsive to changing risks from environmental disasters such as wildfire and drought. The Specific Plan is supported by technical studies such as the project's Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Plan and Water Supply Assessment that analyzed potential risks such as wildfire and drought using scientific modeling and forecasted emergency planning measures that includes adaptive management to evolve into the most current standard in place at the time whenever that phase of the project would be carried out.

In addition to the new fire station being constructed for increased emergency response capability on the west end of Olympic Valley, the project includes buildings constructed of fire-hardened materials and a broader level of defensible space within the village setting, which is why one of the Olympic Valley Fire Department's current evacuation strategies includes utilizing the resort area as a shelter in place option in the event of an evacuation emergency.

The project's emergency preparedness programs include numerous components of how the resort base area would operate and evacuation planning would be messaged, including staff dedicated to coordination with the Public Service District early notification/evacuation protocols.

**What is the estimated timeline of when the project will be back before the Board of Supervisors for a decision?**

The project will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for their decision on November 19, 2024.

Details will be published to the project webpage: <https://www.placer.ca.gov/8213/Village-at-Palisades-Tahoe-Specific-Plan>

**What is the Mountain Adventure Center?**

The Mountain Adventure Center is a 90,000-square-foot year-round, state-of-the-art indoor/outdoor mountain training facility combined with a family adventure camp intended for use by the community, Team Palisades Tahoe ski and snowboard team, and resort guests. It may also include conference spaces, performing arts, skier/guest services, employee spaces, and other resort amenities. The resort's intention is for the activities the Mountain Adventure Center houses to align with the culture of the Valley.

**Why can't you start the workforce housing included in the Plan now?**

The Specific Plan must first be re-approved by Placer County before Palisades Tahoe can submit project-level plans that would ultimately permit construction. We recognize the need for workforce housing and are committed to providing up to 300 beds in the valley in the first phase of the project.



**I want to make sure that I have a voice in Placer County’s process of deciding if this project should be approved or denied. What opportunities will I have? Can I get on a list of persons who receive notice of project hearings?**

The process for the public to address their concerns began during the County circulation of the Partially Revised Draft EIR and public hearing with the Planning Commission on January 19, 2023, to receive comments on the adequacy of the Revised Draft EIR analysis. As the project has proceeded through the hearing process there have been multiple opportunities for the public to comment including scheduled meetings with the Olympic Valley MAC, Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors who will ultimately decide on whether the project entitlements address all of the important issues.

The County maintains a list of persons who have requested notification of project hearings before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. To be added to the notification list, send an email request to [cdraecs@placer.ca.gov](mailto:cdraecs@placer.ca.gov) or reach out to the project planner, Patrick Dobbs, at [pdobbs@placer.ca.gov](mailto:pdobbs@placer.ca.gov) or (530) 745-3060.

Stay informed on the project schedule and information at the project webpage:  
<https://www.placer.ca.gov/8213/Village-at-Palisades-Tahoe-Specific-Plan>

**Where is the plan for this project? Where is the EIR? Can I read them?**

The full Village at Palisades Tahoe Specific Plan and the partially revised draft Environmental Impact Report can be found on the [County website](#).